

North Carolina Guidelines

TRANSITION BETWEEN THE INFANT-TODDLER PROGRAM AND THE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

The following outline describes the process of how young children with disabilities move through the transition process from Part C services (Infant-Toddler Program) to Part B services (Preschool Program). This process applies only to children already enrolled in an Infant-Toddler Program or children who are referred to the Infant-Toddler Program shortly before their 3rd birthday. The outline is intended as a guide, a recommended process for transitioning young children from the Infant-Toddler Program into the Preschool Program. This process may be somewhat different in different communities and also may change according to the needs of individual children. Supplemental steps are listed for children with vision or hearing impairments because their service needs may be more intensive and require more lead time in planning. Local agencies may use these steps with other children with similar needs as well.

On or Before the Child's Second Birthday (Primarily for children with vision and hearing problems):

- A. Child Service Coordinator (CSC) should contact the local education agency (LEA) to provide information about the child with a visual impairment or hearing loss.
- B. The following information should be provided to the LEA: How many children will be turning 2 with vision and hearing problems? What are their modalities/communication approaches? What level of service is indicated on their Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)? What is the child's hearing age and language age?

Six Months Prior to Child's Third Birthday:

For children with vision and hearing problems:

- A. It is highly recommended that a meeting with service providers, CSC and parents be convened at this time as the needs of a child who is visually impaired or has a hearing loss may require additional assistance from the LEA and/or require additional specialists to ensure all IDEA requirements for FAPE are met by the LEA.
- B. Every effort is made to establish the mode of communication and assistive technology needs for individual children.
 - 1. This may include, but is not limited to, large print storybooks and various devices in order for the child with a visual impairment to reach developmental levels.
 - 2. This may include, but is not limited to, instruction in sign language, instruction using the Auditory Verbal approach or Cued Speech, FM sound system, or other devices in order for the child with hearing loss to communicate and reach developmental levels.
- C. At this meeting the parents should be informed of all service options available through the Preschool Program for their child including visitation to different sites/settings. Parents should be made aware that some services available via the Infant/Toddler Program might not be available via the Preschool Program.
 - 1. The prepared transition brochure/handbook should be given to the parents.
 - 2. The CSC and LEA representative (usually the Preschool Coordinator and someone knowledgeable about the child's disability) should work closely with the parents to ensure their input into the transition process and to make the parents aware of the requirement that their child must be determined eligible for and need special education services in order to be served by the LEA under IDEA.

3. Parents should be made aware that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes parents, determines service delivery options.

For all other children:

- A. The CSC contacts the LEA to discuss transition and possible eligibility for preschool services.
- B. The CSC contacts the Developmental Evaluation Center (DEC) to begin the evaluation process if the child is suspected of having a disability.
- C. The transition planning meeting may occur at this time if all parties agree that more time may be needed to plan for appropriate services.

Ninety Days Prior to Child's Third Birthday:

- A. The CSC convenes a transition planning meeting with the following persons:
 1. LEA representative;
 2. Parent;
 3. Representative from the evaluation agency if the child has been evaluated; and
 4. Any other person or service providers who might help support and develop the transition plan.Note: The transition plan is part of the IFSP.
- B. Transition planning meeting may include the following steps:
 1. Referral may be made to the LEA and they may begin official paperwork if all the evaluations have been completed. (From official referral to placement should be 90 days.)
 2. If more evaluations are needed at this time, then the CSC and parents work with the appropriate evaluative agency (usually DEC) to complete the evaluations until the child turns three.
 3. IEP development and possible placement options may be discussed.
 4. Transition plan is reviewed or updated to ensure that:
 - a. Infant-Toddler Program services continue until 3rd birthday;
 - b. Upon 3rd birthday, Preschool Program services become available to eligible children; and
 - c. There is written delineation of joint responsibilities of the sending and receiving agencies for children who have vision and hearing problems.

One Month Prior to Child's Third Birthday:

- A. Preschool IEP team may convene a meeting with the following persons:
 1. Parent, guardian, or surrogate parent;
 2. The CSC, referring agency personnel or representative from current service provider (for children who have vision or hearing problems a representative of the Div. Of Early Intervention and Education);
 3. Special education teacher;
 4. Regular early childhood teacher or service provider (can be child care representative if child is enrolled in a child care setting);
 5. LEA representative;
 6. Person knowledgeable about evaluation results (DEC or LEA rep); and
 7. Other people who are appropriate.
- B. The Preschool IEP team gives rights to the parent (to become effective on 3rd birthday) and finalizes:

1. Official referral-if not done earlier;
 2. Eligibility determination-if all evaluations have been completed; (When eligibility is determined, the IEP must be written within 30 days.)
 3. IEP-actual document may be completed and signed at this time to begin on child's third birthday; and
 4. Placement-placement decisions may be made with official forms signed by parents.
- C. Additionally, for all children, the CSC, LEA representative and the parents, as part of the IEP team, should work closely together to ensure that decisions regarding service provision, once the child is determined eligible for and needs special education, are made collectively by the entire IEP team.
1. At the time of the IEP meeting, if differences between team members exist regarding the services for the child, the IEP team must try to come to consensus.
 2. If the IEP team cannot reach consensus, then the agency responsible for the education of the child must make the decision. The parent(s) must be advised of their rights to due process if they are not in agreement with the LEA's decision on educational services.
- D. Children turning three during the school year may continue to receive Infant-Toddler Program services in the same setting for the remainder of that school year if the following conditions apply:
1. The placement is requested by the family;
 2. The placement is deemed appropriate by the IEP team and documented on the IFSP/IEP;
 3. The service is available; and
 4. There is a plan agreed upon by the Infant-Toddler Program and the IEP team for joint provision and/or payment for services. Example: The Infant-Toddler Program may continue to provide prior levels of the primary service, such as the special education provided by Developmental Day, with schools paying for additional services as determined to be necessary. For such children, the LEA assures FAPE.

Upon Child's Third Birthday:

- A. IEP becomes effective – a free, appropriate public education. (If child becomes eligible over the summer, an IEP may be written for services to begin at the beginning of the school year if the child is not eligible for extended school year.)
- B. IEP team has ensured a smooth transition from Infant-Toddler Program services to Preschool Program services.

TRANSITION FOR CHILDREN NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE PART B PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

- A. The service coordinator, with the approval of the family, convenes a planning meeting to discuss other possible services that the child and family may need and qualify for and to develop a transition plan.
- B. Meeting participants include the family, service coordinator and representatives from any such services.

Note: Beginning with the 2001-2002 school year, children who have vision and hearing problems will be the responsibility of the LEA and they will ensure the implementation of the IEP and count all eligible children on their headcount.

LEA Options in Implementing IEPs for Children with Vision and Hearing Problems

1. Employ appropriately licensed personnel to provide the services.
2. Contract with the Division of Early Intervention and Education (DEIE) to provide direct or consultative services.
3. Contract with appropriately licensed private providers to provide services.
4. Secure a cooperative agreement with appropriately licensed provider (may be the DEIE for direct service and/or consultation).
5. LEAs may develop regional networks of appropriately licensed providers to provide services to multiple LEAs.